

Department of Auditor-Controller

Children's Group Home Ombudsman Activity Report

October 2014

Total Calls	<u>29</u>	General Statistics			
		Youth Callers	Time of Youth Calls		
Calls returned within one business day	<u>29</u>	Female	<u>14</u>	AM	<u>9</u>
Calls resolved within 30 business days	<u>29</u>	Male	<u>2</u>	PM	<u>7</u>
Follow-up calls from hotline	<u>52</u>				
Follow-up calls from visits	<u>0</u>	Total Youth Callers	<u>16</u>		
		Total Adult Callers	<u>13</u>		

CALLS RELATING TO:

Collaboration Contacts/Referrals/Information

DCFS - Social Workers	2
DCFS - Ombudsman	3
DCFS - Child Protection Hotline	1
DCFS - Out-of-Home Care Management	1
Group Home Providers	10
Community Care Licensing	1
Probation Ombudsman	3
State Ombudsman	2
General Information	13

TOTAL: 36 (Note: A call may have multiple contacts/referrals)

Personal Rights

Allowance	1	Health/Med, Dental, Psych Care (Dream Home Care)
2 Clothing (Rosemary's -2)	1	Respect (Maryvale)
Contact	2	School/Community/Religious Svcs (Florence Crittenton)
1 Food (Penny Lane)		Work/Job Skills
Living Conditions		

TOTAL: 7

Personal

Crime/Gang-related	Physical Abuse/Harm
Discipline	1 Fear, Threats, Intimidation, Isolation (Murrell's)
Discrimination	Relationship
Emotional Issues	Sexual Interaction
Pregnancy/Infant Care	Substance Abuse
	Neglect

TOTAL: 1

Other

2 Placement (Mary's Shelter, Penny Lane)	1 Room Search (Florence Crittenton)
1 Independent Living Program (David & Margaret)	1 Personal Belongings/Hygiene Products (Penny Lane)

TOTAL: 5

Visits/Outreach

Luvlee's Residential Care dba New Dawn - 2 sites
 Dream Home Care - 3 sites
 LeRoy Haynes Center - (Joint visit with Probation Ombudsman)

TOTAL: 6 sites

SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION MEETING
November 19, 2014
Reporting for the month of October 2014

AWOLs: There were **163** AWOLs involving **135** youth: **28** youth AWOLED more than once in this same month.

48 remain AWOL	2 HOME
54 returned to GH	1 CCP
30 are in JH	0 Terminated

Outstanding AWOL detainments from previous months and arrests in October 2014:

14 youth were arrested / detained in October who had AWOLED in previous months. **4** are currently in JH, **4** are in a GH, **3** are in Camp, **3** were terminated, and **0** were placed HOP.

Statistics and Findings regarding AWOLs in October:

- 1) 40% of the AWOL incidents were Hispanic males with a mean age of 16.1 years. The second largest population (21%) of AWOLED youth during the month of October was Hispanic females with a mean age of 16.3 years. Black males and females accounted for 13% and 15% respectively. The overall average age of youth who AWOLED in October was 16.1 years.

Recommendation:

- Hispanic males have continued to represent the largest number of AWOL incidents for the past 26 months. The reason for the large number of Hispanic male AWOLs may likely be a representation of the general population of LA County. Even if that is a fact, it still means this is the population that Probation needs to work with to decrease AWOLs. DPOs, Therapists, or other GH and County staff, should interview at-risk youth (mainly Hispanic males around the age of 16) to find out about certain feelings related to age, gender, or cultural stresses and consider possible solutions to decrease these feelings/stresses.
 - Make DPOs and GH staff aware of the demographics that are at most risk of AWOLing. Research and identify possible methods or daily practices of assisting youth to come to a less stressful state of mind.
- 2) The sooner the GH notifies Probation staff of the AWOL, the faster Probation can begin the steps necessary to detain the youth. For the month of October, six (6) of the GHs were non-compliant with notifying Probation about the AWOLED youth within the required time frame; one (1) relative / non-relative was non-complaint with notifying Probation within the required time frame.

Recommendation:

- Continue to reiterate to GH staff and to legal guardians of youth the importance of reporting an AWOL as soon as the incident occurs. Specifically, all AWOLs should be reported within 24 hours in order to expedite the issuance of a bench warrant and the recovery of the youth. Statistics should be shared with GH staff to illustrate the real results of delayed reporting.
- 3) As with previous months, certain GHs showed a higher percentage of AWOLs than other GHs. This was determined by taking the number of AWOLs for that month and comparing it to the number of beds available in the GH (population). It is important to note that youth who AWOLED more than once in the same GH were only counted as 1 AWOL. For October 2014, 6 GHs had a 30% or higher AWOL rate which is lower than the previous month (9).

Recommendation:

- Continue to track the frequency of AWOLs for each GH and see if a consistent pattern remains amongst the same group homes. At this point, certain GHs have shown to have a consistently high number of AWOLs.
 - Several confounding factors have to be controlled to identify a direct correlation between GH treatment of youth and AWOLs. For example, a high AWOL rate for a GH could only mean that that particular GH gets higher risk youth.
 - Investigate GHs that have an unusually high number of AWOLs compared to other GHs to see possible reasons.
 - Interview youth during investigation.
 - Create a plan of action based on results (directives for GH, staff training, etc).
 - Monitor GH to see if trend has stopped after implementation of programs or directives.
- 4) During the month of October, there was a positive correlation detected between bench warrant requests and timely bench warrant issuance and effect on youth detainment. As in, the longer time it took to issue the bench warrant, the less likely it was for the youth to be detained that same month:

Recommendation:

- Regardless of strong or weak correlations, consider the importance of having a bench warrant issued as soon as possible for an AWOLED youth. Overall, the sooner a bench warrant is issued, the more likely it is that the youth will be detained by the end of the month (as several previous months' data has shown).

Final Remarks on AWOLs: Similar to last month, all 'insignificant' AWOLs were also incorporated into the data this month (i.e. youth Awoling for an hour). Certain trends relating to race, age, and sex continued to mirror the previous months' data.

iTrack (SIRs)-

There were **0** child deaths and **0** suicide attempt reported for the month of October 2014 in the iTrack automated reporting system.

For the month of October, the "Other" category for SIRs is the second largest category.

Recommendation:

- Continue to instruct all iTrack users to NOT select the category "other," unless incident undeniably does not belong under any specific category. Another option is to remove the category "other," and instead add additional specific categories (once it is determined why users are selecting "other"). Probation is currently discussing improvement ideas regarding iTrack with ISD software managers.
- Probation is currently tracking all iTrack incident reports, specifically those listed as other, and will continue to provide the findings to the GH's and instruct them to refrain from using the "other" category unless absolutely necessary. It seems like this dialogue maybe the reason the number of incident reports listed as "other" has seen a decrease for the past 2 months. This dialogue will likely continue to decrease the frequency of over utilizing the "other" category; it may also provide the GH's an opportunity to retrain the staff members that continuously select the "other" category instead of properly categorizing the incidents.

GROUP HOME MONITORING AND INVESTIGATIONS:

Child Abuse:

We had **8** referrals for the month of October 2014. **6** were **Unfounded**, **1** is **Inconclusive**, and **1** is **Pending**.

Vista Del Mar – Youth alleged that he was physically abuse by a staff that tried to grab a cell phone from him, resulting in a black eye (right eye area) and a swollen thumb. The allegation was **Unfounded**.

Children Are Our Future (Harvey House) - A DCFS youth alleged that there is drug use and fighting going on in the home. In addition, the GH is unkempt and spider webs are at the entrance of the home. The allegation was **Unfounded**.

David & Margaret - Youth alleged that a female GH staff took her to her home after a court appointment, smoked a cigarette in front of her, and disclosed that she (staff) is gay. The staff then allegedly showed the youth "a picture of her butt". The allegation was **Unfounded**.

New Beginnings - A San Bernardino City youth alleged that she was being bullied by other youth in the GH and did not feel safe. SCAR was generated due to two Probation youth placed in the same GH. The allegation was **Unfounded**.

New Beginnings - Youth told staff that two other youths were smoking marijuana. The youth is now afraid of retaliation from the two youth, as the staff has done nothing regarding her reporting. The allegation was **Unfounded**.

Optimist (Main) - A Sacramento City youth alleged that he saw a female staff and another resident in the bathroom with staff preforming oral sex on him. Additionally, the

same youth alleged that he saw the same staff give the youth crystal meth from a baggie that was in her mouth. The allegation was **Unfounded**.

San Gabriel Children's Center - Youth alleged that a staff physically assaulted him. The allegation is **Inconclusive**.

Delilu - The youth wrote a complaint letter to Delilu Administration that she feels unsafe, intimidated and bullied by a staff "Tiawana". The staff is alleged as threatening the youth and making her feel uncomfortable. The allegation is **Pending**.

Group Home Investigations:

We had 6 Group Home investigations during the month of October 2014. 4 that were **Unfounded**, and 2 are **Pending**. There were 8 Follow-up investigations: 3 have been **Substantiated**, 3 have **No Finding**, and 2 are **Unfounded**.

Full Investigations:

Children Are Our Future (Chatsworth) – A Neighbor has made another complaint against this GH, one of many in the past. Neighbor alleged that the GH left the sprinklers on for 24 hrs. and it flooded his yard. Additionally, the youth at the GH have been throwing lemons in his pool and is concerned that they could hit himself, his dog or girlfriend. Neighbor claims that there is no supervision at the GH. The allegation was **Unfounded**.

CYSAF - Youth's father alleged that the GH Administrator put his hands near the youth's neck and threatened him to run a good program. The allegation was **Unfounded**.

New Beginnings (Raja) – Staff Negligence: During a Child Abuse investigation it was discovered that the youth snuck a boy into the Group Home, without staff knowing. **Compliance Violation:** In addition, it was also discovered that the GH, once aware, never reported in the I-track system or the GH OD Line. The allegation was **Unfounded**.

Pacific Lodge – Youth threatened to kill three youth and a staff. Group Home did not call the police. The allegation is **Unfounded**.

Loving Life (Compton) – Group Home took youth to his previous GH (CAOF-Chatsworth) to pick up his clothes, which goes against Probation protocol. The youth's things are missing and the youth became outraged and refused to leave, which resulted in an AWOL, when he would not leave with LL staff. The allegation is **Pending**.

Children Are Our Future (Chatsworth) - Drug Related: In conjunction with #5446, above mentioned allegation against Loving Life (Compton), Loving Life staff alleged that when they went to the CAOF GH to pick up the youth's clothing, they noticed that two youth were smoking marijuana in the living room and one youth passed a bag of marijuana to the youth that was there to pick up his clothing, in front of staff. The allegation is **Pending**.

Follow-up:

Vista Del Mar – Compliance Violation: Youth was able to make a "shank" (homemade weapon) from a piece of glass that she found around the outside garden area. The Group Home is to complete a CAP to ensure that there are no dangerous objects around the house. The allegation was **Substantiated**.

Pacific Lodge – A youth cut his finger trying to open his bedroom window. Investigated safety issues and correction. The allegation was **Substantiated**.

Aviva – Medication Related: GH does not have a protocol for when a youth refuses their medication. The allegation was **Substantiated**.

Aviva – During a SBC monthly meeting, it was reported by Michelle Day (AC) that she and the Probation Ombudsman went to the GH and discovered many violations. Additionally, the SBC had recently conducted a visit and found issues with staffing (mostly male) in an all-girls GH and CSEC concerns with Hollywood location. The AC interviewed 18 youth and all had some issue, such as, personal rights violations, compliance violations and no grievance process to name a few. The allegation had **No Finding**.

Penny Lane – Multiple physical altercations have been occurring and possible supervision issues. The allegation had **No Finding**.

Crittenton - Youth was involved in a physical altercation that may not have been properly handled with the staff involved, as the incident seemed very chaotic. The allegation had **No Finding**.

Phoenix House – There was a possible bullying incident at the GH. The allegation was **Unfounded**.

Aviva - Youth was able to access the roof and refused to come down until the police came. The allegation was **Unfounded**.

Monitoring:

The 2013-2014, fiscal year is completed. The remaining reports not posted to the Probation website are in the final stages of the approval process and will be posted soon. The 2014-2015, fiscal year is in progress.

Permanency:

We are in various stages of preparation for **2 adoptions** and **2 legal guardianships**.

In October 2014, we completed **0 Adoptions** and **1 Legal Guardianships**.